

New Jersey Open Road Thunderbird Club

Volume 1



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Terrible Towel Traveler

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TOWEL AWARD

The New Jersey Open Road Thunderbird Club was honored to have received a Terrible Towel from the Pitt Birds on July 17, 2015. Barbara Longstreth presented the Towel to club President Pat LeStrange for bringing six classic birds from New Jersey to the 60th Anniversary Thunderbird Display at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix.



CUSTODIAN OF THE TOWEL

Custody of the Towel was entrusted to Martha Downing, an avid NFL fan who goes into withdrawal if she watches less than five games during any NFL week.

Martha presented the Towel to the membership at the Club's July monthly meeting explaining its significance to the Vintage Grand Prix and its extraordinary charitable commitment.

Martha has chaperoned the Towel through most of its exploits over the course of the year, making sure that the Towel remained in pristine condition.



TERRIBLE TOWEL ATTENDS NJORTC ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

On August 16th the Terrible Towel traveled to Schooley's Mountain Park in Long Valley, NJ to join in the festivities associated with the Club's annual picnic. Each year the Club supplies hamburgers, hotdogs and chicken and members bring salads, deserts and drinks. This year contests included a "Name that Car" for the men, a "50's Slogans" for the ladies, a Brownie versus Blondie bake-off, and an egg toss. Counting the Towel, 84 members and friends attended, including Bob and Toni Sabino who were married the day before. This year the kids won the egg toss and Donna Jessie won the Brownie versus Blondies contest with her Amaretto Brownies.



Picnic Chairman Bill Downing and Club President Pat LeStrange bring Towel to picnic.



The crowd starts to arrive. Attendance this year was 19 Birds 83 guests and members, and one Towel.

ALBUQUERQUE TRIP

August continued with a trip to the CTCI Regional Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Although Maryanne and Walter Strohmaier and Donna and Bill Jessie drove their Birds to the CTCI Regional event, after consultation the Towel decided to fly with Lois and Rich Martin. Altogether, ten club members made the trip.





Members of the NJORTC visit with Pat and Joanne at Lead East.

LEAD EAST 50'S PARTY

Although preferring a 70's party, the Terrible Towel joined club members at the annual Lead East Party held at the Parsippany Hilton over Labor Day weekend. Now in its 33rd year the four-day festival draws 1,800 old cars, features doo wop and other 50's music and activities.

Club President Pat LeStrange attends yearly, sometimes bringing his 53 Merc, sometimes bringing his 56 customized Fairlane and other times his 57 Bird. Club member Paul Schroll helps out at the event's repair shop for the weekend.

DEAD MAN'S CURVE 60'S PARTY

The Dead Man's Curve Wild Weekend also takes place over Labor Day weekend, so the Towel decided to take a cruise up to Mahwah to see what that was all about. It was estimated that over the course of the four-day show nearly 3,000 cars came through the gates.

This event continues to grow yearly and is geared more towards the 60's and 70's then the 50's, This year the featured band was the 1910 Fruit gum Company and guest appearances were made by John Schneider of the Dukes of Hazard fame and Candy Clark from American Graffiti.



WILDWOOD

No visit to New Jersey would be complete without a trip to the Jersey Shore, and the Towel was making no exception. So it talked Charlie and Carol Ehm into cutting the September meeting and traveling to the Wildwood Car Show on the Boardwalk. Hearing that a trip to the shore was in order, club members Joe and Arlene Kubat joined in the fun. As a car aficionado the Towel made the obligatory trip to view the cars, but then it was off to the beach for sun and sand.



The Towel helped Carol and Charlie pick out this year's placard colors. Yellow and Black, what a surprise.



The Towel takes time to visit with Pauline Schroll at the Lincoln Park Show

LINCOLN PARK SHOW

For the past five years Carol and Charlie Ehm have organized a car show at the First Reformed Church of Lincoln Park. The October show includes food, music, tricky tray/raffles and trophies. Since the Towel won't go out in the rain, this year the show had to be rescheduled due to weather, but nearly 80 cars showed up for the rain date. Club member Paul Adamoff went home with a trophy for his 55 Raven Black.



Birds getting ready for the Club's annual Fall Cruise.



Marianne Denning and Walter Strohmaier with Towel at Fall Cruise.

FALL CRUISE

The Fall Cruise this year took the club on a 50 mile jaunt from Long Valley, NJ through Warren and Hunterdon Counties before ending at the Hawk Pointe Country Club for a buffet lunch. Fifteen Thunderbirds made the trip, 13 classics, a 59 Square Bird and a 64 Flair Bird Convertible.

Phil and Dorothy Guidone did an exceptional job organizing the event for the Club, planning the route, finding the restaurant, and entertaining the 43 members and guests over lunch.

RIDGEWOOD MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY MINI CAR SHOW

Keeping with its charter the Towel traveled to Ridgewood NJ to attend a mini car show at the Ridgewood campus of the West Bergen Mental Healthcare Facility. Founded in 1963, West Bergen has expanded into a full-range community mental health center serving over 3,000 people each year. Club member Paul Schroll helped organize the show for the patients. Cars from the Meadowlands Hot Rod Association and New Jersey Open Road Thunderbird Club attended.



NJORTC CHRISTMAS PARTY

On December 5th the Club held its annual Christmas Party. Club Vice President, Arlene Kubat, did a fantastic job organizing the event. Sixty-three members and friends attended this year. Attending the Christmas Party also pays your membership dues for the year. Pat LeStrange handled the DJ services, Joanne Seiler the photographer duties and Gene Szuzza took control of the Toys for Tots donations.



The Towel congratulates club members Joanne Seiler and Rich Martin on their election to the CTCL Board.



The Towel gives Santa and Mrs. Claus its Christmas list for this year, Steelers in the playoffs, a surprise once again.



The Towel drops off its Toys for Tots contribution.



Another photo op, who could resist.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW

The holiday festivities continued with a pilgrimage to Pat and Joanne's home and their annual light display. Each year Pat uses miles of extension cords to put up thousands of lights, all computerized, to provide a dazzling light display coordinated with a host of Christmas tunes. Club members, and of course the Towel, were all invited to see the evening show, followed by refreshments and good company.



The Towel visits with Pat and Joanne



Of course the display needed cars!



THE TOWEL GOES TO CALIFORNIA

This year the Towel's plan to make it to California and Levi's Stadium to see its beloved Steelers play got side-tracked in Denver, but it did notice that Hines Ward brought his cousin to the big show. Not dismayed the Towel went to California anyway. The trip was to Signal Hill and the CTCI Club offices, where it attended CTCI's annual Board Meeting as a spectator. While there, the Towel took the opportunity to go to Hollywood and see the Hollywood sign, visited the Griffith Observatory where portions of the James Dean movie, "Rebel Without a Cause" were filmed, and stopped to see Donald Trump's Star during its stroll down Hollywood Blvd.



The Towel meets with the CTCI Board. Who knows what it suggested.



THE SWEETHEART BRUNCH

We had a good turnout for the Sweetheart Brunch held at the Bethwood in Totowa. This year friends from the local Mercedes Club joined us for the festivities.

HAROLD'S DELI

The Club's annual pilgrimage to Harold's Deli in Edison was held in March. Sandy Pyrros put the event together and 24 club members made the trek.



FIFTIES/SIXTIES DANCE

When it comes to dancing with the oldies, the Towel is no slouch. In April, the Towel attended the clubs 50's/60's Sock Hop in Elmwood Park. Dressed in appropriate attire, club members made an evening of it with dancing, contests and food. The Towel did pass on the root beer float, not wanting to get too close to the kitchen while people were washing dishes.



CINCO DE MAYO

Just getting warmed up at the dance the Towel continued its partying activities at the Downing's annual Cinco de Mayo party. Members availed themselves of salsa and chips, poppers, quesadillas, paella, sangria and of course margaritas.

SPRING CRUISE

The Towel missed the boat for this year's spring cruise which featured a boat ride on Lake Hopatcong. For some reason or another the Towel seems to try and avoid water and all activity that might suggest its drying services.



BOONTON CRUISE NIGHT

Friday Nights are pizza and cruise nights in Boonton. Every Friday rain or shine a dozen or more of us go to Delizia's Pizza in Boonton for dinner. (Delizia's is also where we hold a number of club meetings during the course of the year.) In the nice weather our cars come with us to the Starlight Cruisers cruise in the shopping center parking lot.



Paul Schroll and his 48 Ford.



ITC ALL THUNDERBIRD CAR SHOW

In June the Towel traveled to Pompton Plains to participate in the North Jersey Thunderbird Association's annual All Thunderbird Show. All years are invited, and this year 57 cars attended including 18 Classic Birds and 17 Retros. Of special interest this year was a 1956 S Code car. Thunderbirds were given an S code when ordered from the factory with a special color. In 1956 you could have your bird painted in any color Detroit offered that year. The S code at the show had been originally printed a Claret Red IRD, a 1956 Buick color. As in the past the NJORTC supported this show sending a dozen of our own cars.





TUNE UP CLINIC

The club's annual tune-up clinic was held at the end of June. Once again Lois and Rich Martin hosted the clinic at their home in West Milford. This year a record number of classic birds attended with a final count of 21. Most of the tinkering was minor, this year the largest job being a valve adjustment. Two cars did get left behind for Rich to look at, one for a drive train check and the other for a charging issue. The Towel did stay outside, away from the work, enjoying the sun and the club meeting that followed.



RETURN TO PITTSBURGH

After the tune-up clinic the Towel started preparing for a return visit to its beloved Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. Traveling in a three-car caravan this year, the Towel left New Jersey on the morning of July 17th arriving in Pittsburgh that evening. The Towel, and its companions are looking forward to seeing the Pitt Birds.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

We kept the Towel busy this year, visiting:

- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Boonton, NJ
- Edison, NJ
- Elmwood Park, NJ
- Hollywood, California
- Lake Hopatcong, NJ
- Landing, NJ
- Lincoln Park, NJ
- Long Valley, NJ
- Lyndhurst, NJ
- Mahwah, NJ
- Mount Tabor, NJ
- Parsippany, NJ
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Pompton Plains, NJ
- Ridgewood, NJ
- Signal Hill, California
- Totowa, NJ
- Washington Twp., NJ
- West Milford, NJ
- Wildwood, NJ

